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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/846,115	04/30/2001	Masayuki Chatani	375.14.01	5023

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EXAMINER	
NAJJAR, SALEH	
ART UNIT	**PAPER NUMBER**
2157	

DATE MAILED: 06/30/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/846,115	CHATANI, MASAYUKI	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Saleh Najjar	2157	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *30 April 2001*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-30* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-30* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date *08/08/01 04/28/04*.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

1. This action is responsive to the application April 30, 2001. Claims 1-30 are pending. Claims 1-30 represent method and system for altering network transmitted content data based upon user defined characteristics.

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -
>
> (b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1-2, 4-8, 9, 14-19, 22-23, 25-28, and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Matsuda et al., EP 0 843 168 A2, published May 20, 1998 (submitted by applicant as prior art).

Matsuda teaches the invention as claimed including a system and method for a three-dimensional virtual reality space sharing system (see abstract).

As to claim 1, Matsuda teaches a method of modifying content data transmitted from a first computer to a second computer over a bi-directional communication network, comprising:

specifying output characteristics to be associated with the content data upon output by the second computer (see fig. 35-44; col. 43, lines 1-30, Matsuda discloses that the tine of voice generated by own avatar is set by the first user);

transmitting the content data from the first computer to the second computer over the network (see col. 46, lines 20-30, Matsuda discloses that the data is transmitted to a second user); and

altering the content data in accordance with the content data output characteristics to produce altered content data (see col. 46, lines 5-55, Matsuda discloses that the speech inputted is converted according to set parameters) .

Matsuda teaches the method of claim 2 further comprising the steps of: receiving the content data in the first computer (see col. 43, lines 1-30, Matsuda discloses that speech is input into a microphone at the first computer);

digitizing the received content data to produce digitized content data (see col. 46, lines 1-50, Matsuda discloses that the digitized data is produced from the speech data);

transmitting the digitized content data to the second computer over the network (see col. 46, lines 20-30, Matsuda discloses that the data is transmitted to a second user);

altering the digitized content data in accordance with the content data output characteristics (see col. 45-46, Matsuda discloses that digitized data is altered based on user specified parameters);

transforming the altered digitized content data to a form capable of output from the second computer outputting the transformed altered digitized content data from the second computer (see col. 46, Matsuda discloses that the data is transformed and outputted at the second computer).

As to claim 4, Matsuda teaches the method according to claim 1, wherein the received content data comprises:

voice data input into the first computer through a microphone coupled to the first computer (see col. 45, lines 45-55).

As to claim 5, Matsuda teaches the method according to claim 4 wherein the transformed altered digitized content data comprises audio output transmitted through speakers coupled to the second computer (see col. 46).

As to claim 6, Matsuda teaches the method according to claim 5 wherein the content data output characteristics include parameters that alter characteristics associated with the voice output from the second computer, the output characteristics comprising at least one of character gender, character condition, character environment, and language (see col. 46, line 25).

As to claims 7-8, Matsuda teaches the method according to claim 5 wherein the content data output characteristics are input by the user of the first and second computer through a user interface (see col. 45, lines 50-60).

Claims 9, 14-19, 22-23, 25-26, and 30 do not teach or define any new limitations above claims 1-2, 4-8 and therefore are rejected for similar reasons.

As to claims 27-28, Matsuda teaches the server computer according to claim 23 wherein the network comprises an interactive network, and wherein the server computer and the one or more client computers game consoles configured to execute interactive game software wherein the specific content data output characteristics are associated with respective characters in the game software, each character associated with a particular client computer of the one or more client computers (see col. 7, lines 45-50).

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

5. Claims 3, and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuda.

Matsuda teaches the invention substantially as claimed including a system and method for a three-dimensional virtual reality space sharing system (see abstract).

As to claims 3, and 24, Matsuda teaches the method according to claim 1 and the system of claim 23 above.

Matsuda fails to teach the limitation wherein the received content data comprises text data input into the first computer.

However, "Official Notice" is taken that the concept and advantages of inputting text into a first computer for conversion to speech data is old and well known in the art.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Matsuda by specifying the input of text into the first computer. One would be motivated to do so to enable chat applications to implement text to speech recognition.

6. Claims 10-13, 20-21, and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matsuda further in view of Suzuki et al., EP 0696018 A2 published July 2, 1996.

Matsuda teaches the invention substantially as claimed including a system and method for a three-dimensional virtual reality space sharing system (see abstract).

As to claims 10-13, Matsuda teaches the 10. The method according to claim 5 wherein the first computer is coupled to a plurality of client computers over an interactive network, and wherein each user of a client computer is associated with a character represented in a program executed on each computer, each character having associated therewith a specific content data output characteristic (see fig. 1; col. 43-46).

Matsuda fails to teach the limitation of determining a relative location of the user characters in an environment defined by the program and altering the output characteristics of the output audio depending upon the location of each character associated with each of the users wherein the output characteristics comprise a relative volume ratio of output from the left and right speakers, wherein the relative location information for each of the users is stored locally for each of the users, and wherein the relative location information for each of the users is determined by a relative physical location of the users with respect to the interactive network.

However, Suzuki teaches a shared virtual space display method and system where client terminals always send position location information of and adjustment of speech levels are made based on location and distance (see abstract). Suzuki teaches determining a relative location of the user characters in an environment defined by the program and altering the output characteristics of the output audio depending upon the

location of each character associated with each of the users wherein the output characteristics comprise a relative volume ratio of output from the left and right speakers, wherein the relative location information for each of the users is stored locally for each of the users, and wherein the relative location information for each of the users is determined by a relative physical location of the users with respect to the interactive network (see pages 11-13).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Matsuda in view of Suzuki so that voice data is altered based on location information. One would be motivated to do so to provide a realistic perception of virtual characters to client participants.

Claims 20-21, and 29 do not teach or define any new limitations above claims 10-13 and therefore are rejected for similar reasons.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Saleh Najjar whose telephone number is (703) 308-7613. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 6:30 to 3:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, *Ario Etienne*, can be reached on (703) 308-7562. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 308-9052.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-9600. The central official fax number for the group is (703) 872-9306.

Saleh Najjar

location of each character associated with each of the users wherein the output characteristics comprise a relative volume ratio of output from the left and right speakers, wherein the relative location information for each of the users is stored locally for each of the users, and wherein the relative location information for each of the users is determined by a relative physical location of the users with respect to the interactive network (see pages 11-13).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Matsuda in view of Suzuki so that voice data is altered based on location information. One would be motivated to do so to provide a realistic perception of virtual characters to client participants.

Claims 20-21, and 29 do not teach or define any new limitations above claims 10-13 and therefore are rejected for similar reasons.

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-9600. The central official fax number for the group is (703) 872-9306.

Saleh Najjar
Primary Examiner / Art Unit 2157